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Dear Dave:
In my last letter I hope I didn't give the impression that I was trying to persuade you to persuade Joel to get drug treatment for his problem. Where I disagreed with you was mainly in regard to the origin of his problem — you seemed reluctant (on ideological grounds) to accept the likelihood that it originates in brain chemistry, whereas I think there is excellent evidence that many if not all cases of what is called "schizophrenia" originate in brain chemistry, and (so far as I can judge from my very limited knowledge and the limited information you gave me) Joel seems to me to be a likely candidate for schizophrenia.

I agree that there is no clear-cut line dividing insanity from sanity, and that "mental illness" often is a mere label pinned on those who don't act as society demands. Further, I would question whether "mental illness" and "insanity" are even useful concepts — except that they are useful as propaganda tools. On the other hand, when someone is tormented by strange visions and disagreeable feelings that pass through his head owing to a hereditary peculiarity of brain chemistry, it seems absurd to refrain from calling his condition a disease. Many schizophrenics themselves regard their condition as a disease and would much

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prefer to be rid of it. Note that Joel himself considers that he has a "problem" — severe enough so that he has spent a great deal of money on it. On the other hand, it is questionable whether the mildest forms of schizophrenia should be considered as disease, since, if I remember correctly what I read, they may enhance creativity and result only in minimal distortion of thought and perception. And, as you remarked, a great deal of irrationality is normal to human beings anyway.

As to the use of drugs — you well know my feelings about the technological invasion of human dignity. In principle one should resist any step toward interfering in the human mind by technological means. On the other hand, here is this poor guy with a problem, looking for help and getting taken for large sums of money by fakes and crackpots, and who could very possibly be helped quite effectively by a drug that would take a kink out of the chemistry of his brain — it seems almost heartless not to try to point him in the right direction.

Besides the foregoing, other questions could be raised about using or not using drugs. Luckily, it's a decision that I don't have to make — I have the luxury of being able to just dump the problem in your lap.

There is so much more to be said on this problem — but — you see why I don't like to get involved in such questions? To discuss them properly you have to go on almost forever.

I think I can claim to have developed meticulously

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analytical habits of thought and expression, and while this has its advantages, it also has its disadvantages. When discussing an issue of any complexity, you can seldom say just what you want in a few sentences — to be precise you have to start listing exceptions and qualifications and "on the other hands", and many of these exceptions, qualifications, etc. are worthy of considerable discussion in themselves, so you either have to write a long essay, or be content with an incomplete and imprecise expression of your opinion — and with the latter I always feel dissatisfied. Perfectionist tendencies, I suppose. What do the psychoanalysts say about that? Something dreadful no doubt. Lucky psychoanalysis is just a lot of bullshit.

To switch to a more agreeable topic, I've discovered a very interesting Spanish character of the first half of the 18th century — Diego de Torres Villarroel. He was in his youth a kind of con-man and rogue. Later he became a self-educated mathematician and professor of that subject at the University of Salamanca. He was an immensely popular entertainer and astrologer who laughed at his own predictions. He mocked at everything except the king, his noble patrons, and the catholic religion. (He spared the king and nobles no doubt from prudence; but I think it likely that he really believed in religion — unfortunately.) He was a highly eccentric and original character who liked to describe himself as a madman — though he certainly was not that.

Here follows his own account (taken from his autobiography) of one of his youthful escapades. I have

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translated it into English because this guy is extremely difficult to read — in fact, I am far from sure of the accuracy of my translation:

It seems that one day in one of the halls of the University of Salamanca there had been a theological disputation on the question of grace, free will, and predestination. Writes Torres:

"I remember now that one evening a reverend father and doctor came out of the Hall of Theology, heated up with arguing. I viewed him with some annoyance because it was he whom I had the least motive for resenting. I said to him: "Well, Most Reverend, is it true or not that lumen gloriae tota ratio agendi? Has the kicking and shouting decided this ancient question?" "Go on, noramala* (he answered), you're a madman." "We're all mad, Most Reverend (I replied): some are mad within and others are mad without. It is Your Reverence's lot to be mad on the inside, and mine to be mad on the outside. And we only differ in that Your Reverence is a sad and dignified maniac while I am uproariously delirious". He again heatedly reproved my brazenness; and while His Reverence was shouting himself hoarse with dissonant cries, I was tying castanets onto my thumbs under cover of my torn cloak. And without saying another word I began to dance around him with a storm of joyous kicks in the air. We went on wildly for some distance; he shouting a stream of abuse with enraged circumspection, and I madly dancing and clicking the castanets, until he took refuge in another hall, of one of the lesser schools, which he happened to find open".

Latin — I don't know how to translate it.

*What noramala means, I don't know.

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En cuanto a lo que dijiste en una de tus cartas recientes, que ahelabas a las mujeres — me compadezco de tí, habiendo experimentado yo lo mismo. (Pero una de las ventajas mayores de vivir solo y no encontrarse sino raras veces con las mujeres, es que uno se olvida de ellas, y deja de desearlas.) Además, no tienes que avergonzarte de haber sido atraído a una mujer tan indigna como Linda Erickson: Desgraciadamente, los hombres somos demasiado propensos a ser atraídos a mujeres aun cuando sean indignas. A mí también me ha acontecido eso — por asqueroso que sea.

En cuanto a lo que dijiste sobre la palabra "puerco", sin duda tienes razón. Hay que entender que, cuando corrijo tu español, sigo los libros, los cuales dan, por supuesto, los significados oficiales de las palabras, mientras que éstas a menudo se usan de manera más libre fuera de los escritos formales.

Mencionaste a un conductor de autobús que es maníacodepresivo. Se puede preguntar si es bien seguro que maneje un maníaco un autobús, teniendo así a su cargo la vida de muchas personas. Esto recuerda un cuento de Horacio Quiroga: <u>El Conductor del rápido</u> (<u>Engine-Driver of the Express</u>). Trata de un conductor de ferrocarril que se vuelve loco mientras que guía un trén lleno de pasajeros .... No considero que sea este cuento lo que se llama "literatura seria", pero es buen entretenimiento — y a mí me parece algo cómico, aunque no creo que fuese cómica la intención de Quiroga.

Creo que mencionaste, hace tiempo, una obra india que se llamaba Bhagavad Ghita o cosa semejante.

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Pues, acabo de leer una _Historia de la Literatura Sánscrita_ de un Doctor Macdonell. Fue interesante. Deberíamos aprender sánscrito, para poder leer esa literatura en el idioma original.

¿Quieres comprar una ferretería (hardware store)? La ferretería en Lincoln está de venta. No supongo que te intereses, pero lo menciono por si acaso desees ganar tu dinero en un ambiente menos desagradable que el de Chicago. Dudo que sea muy lucrativa la tienda.

—Ted

fine crop of wild strawberries this year. Wish you too could enjoy them.

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